

Subscribe today for unlimited access!

Sign In [Subscribe](#) [Gift Subscriptions](#) [Contact](#) ▾



Marketing Services



[HOME](#) [NEWS](#) ▾ [SPORTS](#) ▾ [OPINION](#) ▾ [CLASSIFIEDS](#) [OBITUARIES](#) [E-EDITION](#)



[MARKETING](#) [CONTACT](#) [SIGN IN](#) [SUBSCRIBE](#)

EDUCATION, LATEST NEWS

The selling of The Renaissance Academy begins: The planned structure would be Mon's first standalone STEM school

November 15, 2023 2:00 pm by [Jim Bissett](#), The Dominion Post

Sweeping vistas.

Dramatic, glass-fronted workstations and learning labs brimming with on-the-edge technology.

And architecture that conforms to its environs, opposed to the other way around.

Monongalia County Board of Education members got a look Tuesday night like never before – at just what might be.

It came by way of computer animation presented during its meeting by the DLR Group, the firm designing The Renaissance Academy.

The planned complex would be the district's first standalone high school devoted solely to STEM (science, technology, engineering and math).

Students from Mon's three public high schools would rotate in and out of the facility during the day in staggered schedules that wouldn't interrupt the required core offerings from their home schools that they also need to graduate.

The campus would sit on a rise of land near Cassville and along Blue Horizon Drive which puts it at equal driving distance from Morgantown High School, University High and Clay-Battelle.

While the BOE has regarded architectural renderings over the past several weeks, Tuesday evening was the first it saw of the computer animation which features digital walk-throughs and flyovers of the facility.

The main floor of the two-story building would house a collection of open-air classrooms and learning labs, while the second is home to additional STEM labs and other classrooms, plus a student services division.

There's an organic touch to it all: That main floor of the 135,000-square-foot school would be designed with terraced areas and recessed ones, also, all the better for student collaboration, DLR's John Chadwick told board members.

The roof will be terraced as well, he said.

Call that a nod to its mountainous home, said Chadwick, an architect and former school administrator who is leading the design from his firm's Washington, D.C., offices.

While DLR has put up similar schools in Missouri, Colorado and Arizona and is currently constructing one in Michigan, don't look for a cookie-cutter set of plans, Chadwick said.

Each design his firm undertakes for a STEM school, he said, is unique to said school's locale, and all that implies.

The idea, Chadwick said, is to make a school that will last – and evolve.

"I've tried to stop looking at 'useful life' of buildings," he said in response to a question from BOE member Mike Kelly. "Ultimately, when you're building a building, it should last for as long as you need it."

Each locale has its own set of challenges, also, he said, in terms of the actual construction.

This one, especially.

The planned site for The Renaissance Academy is a 137-acre tract of reclaimed land, which is unique to West Virginia and its predominate industry of coal mining.

In Mon County, the driver for actually getting the school built will be the voters – who are traditionally generous at the polls in their affirmative votes for the excess education levy, which brings in an additional \$30 million annually to school coffers.

Preliminary bonding totals range from \$110 million to \$125 million, and the goal is to get a workable total on the ballot for this May, which would launch the project in earnest that the district wants to have open to students four years from now.

That's still a big sell, board member Nancy Walker said – even with STEM.

"It's really exciting but it's also really scary," the longtime incumbent said, "because it's a huge project and it has to be approached in just the right way."



Author: **Jim Bissett, The Dominion Post**

MORGANTOWN
WEATHER



36°F
light rain

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
41°F 32°F	39°F 30°F	52°F 28°F	50°F 25°F	25°F 19°F	32°F 7°F	14°F -2°F

Sponsored by



WVU Medicine Video

Dr Badhwar Cox maze 30s...



We love hearing from you! Check out what we're asking for.

Submit Now



Local
businesses

Business
**open in
your
community**

[CLICK HERE](#)

DOMINION POST

[Home](#) [News](#) [Sports](#) [Opinion](#) [Classifieds](#) [Obituaries](#) [E-Edition](#) [Marketing](#) [Contact](#) [Sign In](#)
[Subscribe](#)

Copyright © 2024 Dominion Post